

INVESTIGATING THE TAX OFFICE
The Alderman's Committee Asking Question
of President Asten.

The Alderman's committee met in the office of the Clerk of the Board yesterday to investigate the affairs of the Department of Taxes and Assessments. President Asten invited them to the Tax Office, where they would have better facilities for examining the records. They decided to meet at the Tax Office next Saturday. Mr. Asten offered no objection to the investigation, but, being in doubt about the Alderman's authority to make it, had sent the following reply to the formal notice from Clerk T. W. Moore to attend the committee meeting:

I shall be happy to furnish the gentlemen representing the Board of Aldermen with all the information I possess and aid them in any examination of the records of the department they may desire to make. It must be evident to the great majority that the investigation is necessarily made at the offices of the department where the voluminous records and documents of the department are kept, and it must be further evident that it should be conducted in a manner not to interfere with the regular work of the department, which at present is specially heavy, the books being now open to the public for examination and correction. I will furnish the personal examinations now in progress, as prescribed by law. In so far as gentlemen propose to act under the authority of the Alderman of January 31 last in the words following:

"That a committee of three be appointed by this Board to examine the records of the department and papers, and take the needed steps for investigating the affairs of the Department of Taxes and Assessments." This is the language of the resolution of City Consolidation act. Your obedient servant,

Mr. Alderman Waite said that the laws of 1880 authorized the Common Council to make the investigation, and asked Mr. Asten, "DO YOU propose to stand on your right?"

Mr. Asten replied, "I do not stand on anything. If you come over there we will give you every facility."

Mr. Waite then inquired as to the duties of the Commissioners and deputies, and their how the assessment was made and an assessment is made and passed over.

Mr. Asten—We have printed blanks. If personal application is made, clerks are there, and they can get the parties filled in the names, the date on which the applied blank is submitted, sometimes sworn to, by the agent of the owner of the property. It is referred to the agent of the property. It is the duty of that deputy to read and answer the questions put to him on the subject of the assessment. He ports back his explanation as an answer to whatever inquiries the Board makes. The assessment is made before the Board, and is passed upon. Deputy Michael Coleman sees that these various applications go to their respective assessors. The notices in regard to the assessment are given to the Commissioners in the name of the Board that determines, and there must be twenty days' notice given by law. The only increase that can be made is by a second notice, and that is given to the Board that got this twenty days' notice. The law provides for that.

Mr. Alderman Waite—Now, Mr. Asten, please explain to the committee whether an increase or decrease can be made.

Mr. Asten—The deputy or superintendent has the responsibility of determining whether an increase or decrease is made without the cognizance or authority of the Board.

Mr. Alderman Waite—That would apply to reduction.

Mr. Asten—There are very few applications to increase valuation. It may occur by a objecting that his property is valuable, and then making a new application.

Mr. Alderman Waite—That would apply to reduction.

Mr. Asten—How is it to others?

Mr. Alderman Waite—That would apply to reduction.

Mr. Asten—There are very few applications to increase valuation. It may occur by a objecting that his property is valuable, and then making a new application.

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